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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000719

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S CARSON, AF/C  
NSC FOR MGAVIN  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: UNAMID DEPLOYMENT UPDATE, JUNE 1, 2009

REF: A) KHARTOUM 697  
B) KHARTOUM 544

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UNAMID deployment stands at approximately 69 percent, with 13,485 mission staff already deployed to Darfur. UNAMID officials predict, however, that the mission may not reach full deployment until early 2010. With the rainy season approaching, progress on deployment will slow over the summer months and not pick up again until September. Senior UNAMID leadership in El Fasher remains disappointed that key logistical units have not yet been pledged (such as critically-needed military transport helicopters.) Nevertheless, they point out recent operational improvements as evidence of the maturation of the once-maligned peacekeeping force. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Current deployment of the UN-African Union Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) stands at 13,485, approximately 69 percent of the total permitted under UNAMID's current mandate. UNAMID Formed Police Units (FPUs), designated to patrol within IDP camps and towns of Darfur, are currently deployed at only 50 percent of full capacity. Senior UN officials in New York predict all peacekeeping troops, FPUs and international support staff will be fully deployed by November of this year. However, according to Colonel Noddy Stafford, chief of J-5 plans for UNAMID in El Fasher, UNHQ's rosy outlook does not take into account the negative impact of the rainy season on hindering deployment, particularly in Sector West. Based on experience gained during last year's rainy season, Stafford foresees that the dirt "roads" used by UNAMID to transport contingent-owned equipment (COE) from El Obeid to Darfur will turn completely into muddy gullies by July. He adds that with all the slots for transport at the region's airports already taken, no air options will exist to hasten deployment during the rainy season.

¶3. (SBU) Recent arrivals to Darfur indicate slow but steady progress in UNAMID deployment. The May arrival of the Bangladeshi Movcon platoon presages the completion of the deployment of the South African battalion to North Darfur, whose final 201 members will arrive in June. The largest scheduled influx of peacekeeping troops remains the 1,650 members of the Egyptian battalion, whose advance reconnaissance party has not yet scheduled a visit to Darfur. As a result, the Egyptian arrival will most likely be pushed back until well after the rainy season, in September or October. Additionally, UNAMID senior leadership remains disappointed that concrete pledges have yet to emerge to finance the speedy overland deployment of the 2nd Ethiopian battalion, whose 170-vehicle convoy intends to drive directly from Addis Ababa to Sector South, Darfur, as soon as funding is secured.

¶4. (SBU) UNAMID received formal notification in mid-May that the Thai parliament has approved deployment of a Thai peacekeeping battalion to Sector West in late summer 2009. UNAMID leadership in El Fasher is not aware of any foreseeable that would delay the deployment of this peacekeeping battalion, but the unpredictable

ferocity of the rainy season will most likely delay its full deployment. In a promising sign, the UNDPKO's Force Generation Service has formally requested details of the Thai reconnaissance party due to conduct its operations in Darfur June 6 to 11, after which UNAMID will have a better idea of the requirements and capacities of the Thai battalion.

¶15. (SBU) In response to concerns on the ground in Darfur, UNAMID senior leadership has engaged in a series of pro-active moves that they hope will signify the strategic maturation of their fledgling mission. After fighting in May between rebel factions and Sudanese forces in the towns of Umm Barro and Karnoi, in the far western corner of Sector North, UNAMID redrew its map to designate what comprises "Dar Zaghawa" as part of Sector West. UNAMID officials predict this change will ensure swifter reaction to conflict in the area, and better monitoring, as the area is technically closer to El Geneina than El Fasher. Also in Sector West, by the end of the year, UNAMID will have deployed three Francophone battalions, assisting in interacting with refugees and their counterparts in EUFOR across the border in Chad. Finally, aware that IDPs and Darfuris remain skeptical that the presence of peacekeeping troops can ensure security in rural areas of Darfur, UNAMID peacekeepers have conducted patrols in 5,620 villages of Darfur over the last four months, and senior leadership pledges to continue to increase such patrols in rural areas.

¶16. (SBU) However, in addition to continued snags in the deployment of the second Ethiopian battalion, UNAMID claims the mission is facing substantial operational shortfalls the solutions for which lie in increasing the commitment of the international community to peace and stability in Darfur. Key contributions required by UNAMID, but not yet pledged, include a transportation unit, a

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multi-role logistics unit, fixed-wing military aircraft, and military transport helicopters. UNAMID Joint Special Representative Rodolphe Adada, who spoke with Codel Isakson in El Fasher on May 26 (ref A), said, "Even at full deployment, the geography of Darfur presents challenges, and we need full mobility. That is why aviation assets are key."

¶17. (SBU) Comment: Senior mission leadership is genuinely appreciative of the recent achievements of the Friends of UNAMID, and they look to the U.S. for leadership on resolving recurring UN logistical and operational shortfalls. Disappointingly, however, JSR Adada steadfastly avoided the issue of GOS stalling on visas for Western staff officers during his May 26 briefing for Codel Isakson.

Privately, Post concurs with ranking UNAMID military officers that the presence of experienced military officers is the main reason why UNAMID has come so far in the last twelve months. With the peace process and humanitarian coverage in Darfur dependent for full resolution on more than just the Government of Sudan's political good-will, approval of visas for senior Western military officers seconded to UNAMID should be a key request to officials from the National Congress Party during our ongoing discussions with them. End comment.

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